THE LITERARY TABLET.

BY NICHOLAS ORLANDO.

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ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS.

FOR THE LITERARY TABLET.

NATURAL HISTORY.

NATURAL hiſtory, though much neglected, is well worthy the attention of every perſon deſirous of being diſtinguiſhed in literature. Many ſuppoſe it adviſable to confine themſelves principally to that profeſſion, which they intend ſhall be the buſineſs of their future lives, and think a knowledge of thoſe things, not immediately connected, of little importance. But whatever tends to enlarge the powers of the mind, or extend its views of the wiſdom and omnipotence of the Creator, ought never to be neglected. The great advantage, ariſing from an accurate inſpection of nature's works, is the correcting and expanding our ideas concerning the firſt cauſe, and enabling us to ſilence thoſe, who deny the authenticity of revelation, by arguments drawn from the regular formation of natural bodies, and their peculiar adaptation to the ſeveral purpoſes, for which they were deſigned. He, whoſe knowledge is confined to ſcripture, cannot reaſon effectually with him, who diſbelieves all the writings of antiquity, both ſacred and profane. But he, who can open the "volume of nature" and ſhew the imprinted characters of the Almighty in a light ſo conſpicuous, that the blind would almoſt acknowledge the hand-writing, may ſafely challenge the atheiſt to ſtand forth and ſupport his own principles, or raiſe objections to thoſe which wiſdom pronounces juſt and true. Why is the earth cloathed in beauty and decked with ornaments innumerable? Why does it give nouriſhment to creatures as various, "as thought could make them" and more numerous than man can conceive? Theſe all anſwer ſome important deſign; they were not created to appear and be forgotten, without ſubſerving the different purpoſes, for which they are qualified. To inveſtigate theſe purpoſes and underſtand the manner, by which they are effected, muſt afford pleaſure to every enquiring mind. Not an inanimate object lies buried in the duſt, not a vegetable grows in the field, that is undeſerving the conſideration of the brighteſt genius. Volumes have been compoſed in deſcribing the affinities, combinations, and other properties of natural bodies, and many have eſteemed it a pleaſure in devoting their lives to the ſtudy of a ſmall portion of natural hiſtory. Though their diſcoveries have been many and important in that ſcience, to which they directed their attention, yet perhaps more weighty truths remain to be unfolded by future chemiſts. If then, little is known, where no labour, or expence has been avoided, we may ſurely expect that ſome of the phenomena, hitherto thought inexplicable, in objects partially conſidered, will ere long be diſcloſed to the world. Is it more difficult to aſſign the cauſe of one vegetable's never aſſuming the colour and texture of another, than it was to diſcover and ſeparate the different principles, of which the atmoſphere is compoſed? Becauſe the ancients have not informed us, how the oak chooſes its nouriſhment and forms wood unlike that of the maple, ſhall we conclude it a ſecret hidden from our knowledge? "Nature abhors a vacuum," with them was a wiſe anſwer to a hard queſtion, and muſt the "arcana naturæ" be of the ſame ſervice to us? Let us not, in cheriſhing indolence, abandon whatever may require cloſe inveſtigation, nor avoid it as forbidden fruit, but be diligent in laying open the abſtruſe works of creation.

The gold of Ophir was inſufficient for making the external appearance of Solomon equal in beauty to the lily of the valley. If ſuch goodneſs is diſplayed in cloathing the fields, in rendering inſenſible things pleaſing to our ſight, it muſt appear ſtill more evident in the animal kingdom. To know that no creature exiſts, ſo inſignificant, or ſo apparently void of ſenſation, but what conſtitutes an eſſential link between man and inanimate matter, muſt make us inquiſitive to learn the connexion, or dependence of one order of beings upon another, and the relation of each to man, for whoſe convenience and happineſs, they are permitted to remain on the earth. We may imagine, many tribes of inſects and reptiles uſeleſs in themſelves and greatly detrimental to the peace and ſecurity of other animals; but could we diſcover the intimate union, which is probably eſtabliſhed between all parts of creation, we might ſee how neceſſary the exiſtence of the loweſt claſs is to the welfare of all others.

That, which is poiſon for man, to ſome animals is the moſt agreeable food; and that, which conſtitutes the happineſs of a creature of a particular ſtructure and organization, to one differently formed, would be miſery, or death.

This is certainly an extenſive field, in which the mental faculties may be employed, not only with pleaſure to ourſelves, but advantage to others. N.

FOR THE LITERARY TABLET.

SYSTEM.

To mitigate the evils and perplexities incident to human life, it is an object of the firſt importance, that every perſon, whatever be his profeſſion or purſuit, ſhould have a ſyſtem of conduct. In all ſtations and circumſtances, he will experience the beneficial effects of having certain eſtabliſhed rules or principles to govern his actions.

The man, who lives under the influence of this idea, who preſerves regularity in opinion and uniformity in action, is prepared for every emergency. But mark the oppoſite. Deſtitute of ſyſtem, he acts only from the impulſe of the moment—He ſails on the boiſterous ocean of life, toſſed by every wave of deluſive project, and driven by every wind of public opinion. Syſtem is equally neceſſary in the extenſive fields of ſpeculation and the rounds of daily buſineſs, in forming theory and habituating to practice.

Perhaps in no ſituation is the truth of theſe obſervations more rationally evinced, than in that of the Divine. Here a wide ſcope for diſcuſſion is preſented, in which the wiſeſt and beſt men may diſagree. It involves ſubjects, which are altogether polemical, and which require great attainments, found judgment, and cloſe attention, to do juſtice to their importance. Under this view, to confound the devices and obviate the objections of the Infidel, to be always ready for an anſwer upon any point, and to avoid the imputation of inconſiſtency, a *ſyſtematical* knowledge of theology is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to every Teacher of the Goſpel. Voltaire, Helvetius, Rouſſeau, Hume, and Paine, with the other diſtinguiſhed Infidels of modern times, had their principles of Deiſm as much reduced to a ſyſtem, as the moſt eminent Theologian has his religious tenets. By this means they were enabled more effectually to diſſeminate their baneful principles, and to reſiſt the force of truth.

The true philoſopher alſo has a ſyſtem in his ſcientific acquirements, which he is always ready to defend. Even upon the moſt ſecret operations and inviſible agents of nature, he will have ſome ſettled notions, which reaſon leads him to entertain, and which he can always bring ſome arguments to ſupport. But the man, who would make pretenſions to a knowledge of philoſophy without theſe qualifications, without having regular and eſtabliſhed theories, muſt be perplexed by every captious diſputant, and become the ſport of every ingenious caviller. The ſtateſman, the politician, and the orator, if they would avoid the paths of error, and ſhine conſpicuouſly in their profeſſions, cannot be inſenſible to the importance of ſyſtem. JASON.

AN OLD BOOK,—is like an old cheeſe: It may have a dirty, worm-eaten cover; but the inſide is often a *tid bit*.

[*Far. Museum.*

SELECTIONS.

From the Dartmouth Gazette.

" Who turns his eye on nature's midnight face,
" But muſt enquire—What hand behind the ſcene ?"

DESIGN is viſible throughout all nature. The rational mind does not ſurvey the objects with which it is ſurrounded, without enquiring, " What hand behind the ſcene ?" The infant commences his exiſtence with admiration and aſtoniſhment. He opens his eyes on the works of creation, and beholds a world of wonders. Infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs are portrayed on every ſide. Every object bears the impreſſion of the hand of God. Every thing proclaims his exiſtence, in a language too forcible for reaſon to reſiſt. Though millions, who once peopled our earth, now ſleep in duſt, Deity ever lives; we can always read of Him in the bright volume of nature.

That matter ſhould be ſelf created, that worlds guided by chance ſhould roll regularly round their orbits is inconſiſtent, is abſurd. The regularity, the order, and the harmony of nature prove intelligence and deſign. When man ſurveys the verdant fields, the murmuring rill, or the waving foreſt, all calculated to pleaſe and inſtruct; when he extends his thoughts further, and contemplates the diſtant parts of the Univerſe; when he views the whole ſyſtem adjuſted in the niceſt order, and preſerving the ſame for a long courſe of ages, he is irreſiſtibly led to believe the exiſtence and government of a God. Chance forms neither order nor deſign. But from the inſect to the higheſt grade of intelligent beings; from the mote which ſkims over the ſmooth ſurface of the lake, to this immenſe globe, which ſails through the expanded heaven, all is harmony, all exhibits the wiſdom of a wiſe, powerful Creator.

But, granting that a blind fatality governs the univerſe; granting that chance points the needle to the pole, that it inſtructs the radiant ſource of day when to hide his bright beams in the weſtern ocean; ſtill, Infidel, bluſh to acknowledge the exiſtence of a God. Matter could not create itſelf. If worlds, if ſyſtems, ſelf-moved, ſtarted from nothing into being, why do we not behold other ſuns decorating our firmament, and other worlds revolving through the immenſity of ſpace? Wherever we find matter, we ſee the effect of a cauſe. That cauſe muſt be infinite, muſt be ſelf-exiſtent, and no leſs than the great Jehovah.

Man, endued with reaſon and underſtanding, is a proof of the exiſtence and intelligence of a God. Though confined to a few feet of earth, in imagination he ſoars from an atom to a world, and from a world to a ſyſtem. While reaſon and intelligence beam in his countenance, his ſoul glows with univerſal philanthropy. Could chance form ſo noble, ſo exalted a being? As well might we expect to behold the clods of the valley quickening under our feet, and riſing into animated, into rational forms. Man, whoſe faculties are capable of indefinite improvement, can be no leſs than the work of Omnipotence.

In the word of divine truth the Supreme Being is deſcribed in the moſt ſublime and moving ſtrains. He is there repreſented as ſurrounded with clouds and darkneſs; as enthroned in righteouſneſs and judgment; as that Being at whoſe preſence the hills melted; at whoſe command the " ſtars ſung together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy." From ſuch a being can we refrain our homage? Can we withhold a tribute of adoration when even the lower orders of beings daily hymn their Maker's praiſe? " Shall man be mute while inſtinct ſings?" Shall the wilderneſs break forth in ſongs, and not a kindred fibre be found in the human breaſt to vibrate to the praiſe of the great Creator? Rather let every human tongue join the general chorus of nature, in that more elevated ſtrain his ſuperior faculties demand, to the bounteous Donor. S.

The idea of an eternal ſucceſſion of men refuted.

IT is an imagination that frequently enters the minds of men, eſpecially of the young, that this world may have been eternal, and had an eternal ſucceſſion of men upon it. As this ſuppoſition is inimitably refuted by Dr. Bently, a man who has with much dexterity bruſhed away all the cobweb ſubterfuges of atheiſm, I am induced to copy a paragraph from his valuable work, and ſend it for inſertion in your uſeful Miſcellany.

"The opinion of thoſe Atheiſts, that will have mankind and other animals to have ſubſiſted eternally in infinite generations already paſt, will be found to be flat nonſenſe and contradiction to itſelf; and repugnant alſo to matter of fact. Firſt, it is contradiction to itſelf. Infinite generations of men (they ſay) are already paſt and gone. But whatſoever is now paſt, was once actually preſent; ſo that each of thoſe infinite generations was once in its turn actually preſent: therefore all except one generation were once future and not in being, which deſtroys the very ſuppoſition: for either that one generation muſt itſelf have been infinite, which is nonſenſe: or it was the finite beginning of infinite generations between itſelf and us, that is infinitely terminated at both ends, which is nonſenſe as before. Again, infinite paſt generations of men have been once actually preſent. There may be ſome one man ſuppoſe then, that was at an infinite diſtance from us now; therefore that man's ſon likewiſe, forty years younger ſuppoſe than his father, was either at infinite diſtance from us, or at finite. If that ſon too was at infinite diſtance from us, then one infinite is longer by forty years than another; which is abſurd: if at finite, then forty years added to finite makes it infinite, which is as abſurd as the other. And again, the number of men that are already dead and gone is infinite as they ſay. But the number of the eyes of thoſe men muſt neceſſarily be twice as much as that of the men themſelves, and that of the fingers ten times as much, and that of the hairs of their heads thouſands of times. So that we have here one infinite number twice, ten times, and thouſands of times as great as another, which is contradiction again. Thus we ſee it is impoſſible in itſelf that any ſucceſſive duration ſhould be actually and poſitively infinite, or have infinite ſucceſſions already gone and paſt. Neither can theſe difficulties be applied to the eternal duration of God Almighty. For, though we cannot comprehend eternity and infinity, yet we underſtand what they are not. And ſomething, we are ſure, muſt have exiſted from all eternity; becauſe all things could not emerge and ſtart out of nothing. So that if this pre-exiſtent eternity is not compatible with a ſucceſſive duration, as we clearly and diſtinctly perceive that it is not; then it remains, that ſome being, though infinitely above our finite comprehenſions, muſt have an identical, invariable continuance from all eternity; which being is no other than God. For, as his nature is perfect and immutable without the *leaſt ſhadow of change*, ſo his eternal duration is permanent and indiviſible, not meaſurable by time and motion, nor to be computed by number of ſucceſſive moments: *One day with the Lord, is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.*"

Let the reader peruſe the foregoing extract, and pauſe at each link in the chain of argument, and if all is found and irrefragable, let him never admit for a moment the abſurd hypotheſis of an eternal ſucceſſion.—*Panopliſt.*

SUPERSTITION.

THE popular ſuperſtitions of every country afford not only amuſement to the credulous and inquiſitive, but furniſh ſubjects of curious ſpeculation to the philoſopher and hiſtorian. The genius and manners of a people, their progreſs in civilization, and even the very character of the country and climate they exiſt in, may, in a great meaſure, be aſcertained from the nature of their mythological creed. In the early ſtages of ſociety, where no extenſive or complicated union has taken place for mutual defence and protection, man is expoſed to perpetual and numerous dangers; in a ſtate of almoſt continual warfare with the tribes around him, or employed in the ſevere and almoſt equally dangerous toils of the chace for his daily ſubſiſtence, he is altogether indebted for life and ſafety to his own individual exertions; hunger and revenge call aloud for gratification, and occupy every intellectual effort of the Being thus ſituated, every direction of his muſcular ſtrength. Obnoxious to various perils, at one time almoſt periſhing for want of food, at another putting in practice every wily ſtratagem to entrap a foe or protect himſelf; ignorant of the cauſes and effects of all the mighty phenomena of nature which ſurround him, and conſcious from dire experience of his own frequent inefficiency to gratify his appetites, or ſatiate his reſentments, the ſavage naturally looks for aſſiſtance beyond the pale of mortality. Unacquainted however with any rational ſyſtem of religion, he calls into being, and gives local habitation and a name to, the wanderings of a terrified imagination; the thunder, the lightning, and the whirlwind, the roaring of the mountain torrent, the ſighing of the gathering ſtorm, the illuſive meteors of night, and the fleeting forms of clouds and miſt, are with him the appalling tones and awful viſitations of ſupernatural beings. He hears the ſpirit of the whirlwind or the water ſhriek, and either implores the aſſiſtance, or deprecates the wrath of agents whoſe powers are gigantic, and whoſe modes of operation are illimitable and unſeen. Should he inhabit a country peculiarly rude and gloomy in its aſpect, where the almoſt boundleſs heath, the ſtupendous mountain or the darkening foreſt form the prominent features of the landſcape, where ſilence and ſolitude, unbroken but by the harſh ſcreaming of the bird of prey, or the tumults of the ruſhing tempeſt, brood over the ſcene in ſolemn majeſty, his ſuperſtitious fears partake of the wild and melancholy ſublimity which the objects before him are calculated to inſpire, and breathe a much ſeverer ſpirit than the credulity of a country more fertile and chearful in its produce and appearance could give riſe to.

[Drake's Lit. Hours.]

Surprising Extrication of Inflammable Air.

Near one of the ſources of Licking River, in Kentucky, there is a ſeparation of Philogiſtous gas from ſomething in the interior ſtrata, in greater quantity than is perhaps known in any part of the world. This light and inflammable fluid is diſcharged through water in the atmoſphere. It bubles inceſſantly through the centre of a muddy pool, of about two rods in diameter. The gas readily takes flame on burning gunpowder in it, or by the approach of any blazing body. The volume of it is ſo great a man who approached near enough to ſnap a piſtol in it which he held in his hand, was ſuddenly enveloped in the flame, and ſorely ſinged before he could eſcape. When ſet on fire, it burns with remarkable ſplendor and vehemence, not only for hours, but days and weeks in ſucceſſion, mounting to the height of ten or twelve feet or more. The relater of this (Mr. Senator Brenckenridge) was one of a party that encamped near this ærial fountain, on an excurſion through the woods. They diſcovered, that after the inflammable air had been on fire for ſix or eight hours, the water of the pond was heated to an uncomfortable degree, and emitted copious exhalations; and the ebullition at the ſpot through which the air aſcended was more vehement.

It was judged, that if the flame had been ſufficiently continued, the water would have been made to boil, and all have been evaporated—then the ſurrounding ſpace would have been heated and dried. And laſtly, there was reaſon to ſuppoſe that the faculent and carbonic matter in the bottom of the pond would have been put into a ſtate of combuſtion —From the crater at the place through which the gas roſe, and the evacuation of the ſurrounding ground, it appeared as if this had really happened on ſome former occaſion; and for fear the like might occur again the gentlemen of the party extinguiſhed the flame, by flapping, agitating and diſſipating it with green boughs before the water aroſe to a temperature too hot to enable them to approach near enough for this purpoſe by wading into it. When once in a blaze there ſeems no end to its burning, but the ſtop which a ſtorm of wind and rain may put to it.—*N. Y. Spectator.*

FROM THE CHARLESTON COURIER.

Cure for the Dyſentery.—In one gill of fountain water diſſolve as much common table, or ſea ſalt, as it will take up or melt; add to it one gill of good vinegar.

Of this mixture, give once in a quarter or half an hour, to grown perſons, or to children, ſuch doſes as the ſtomach will bear without puking.—If a conſiderable portion of the eſſence of peppermint be added it will be a valuable improvement of the medicine.

The ſick perſon may drink freely of Port, Madeira, or any good wine, or if theſe cannot be procured, he may drink French brandy, or common ſpirits, moderately diluted with water and ſweetened with ſugar.

To a refined ear, the *muriate of ſoda* might have ſounded more agreeable than common table or ſea ſalt. The dyſentery, however, is not ſeated in the ear; and as this malady, ſo often fatal, may reach the humble cottager, it is hoped the ſimple garb will not preclude him from a knowledge of the remedy.

The ſymptoms, which prevailed in thoſe caſes where the writer of this ſketch applied the above deſcribed remedy, are at firſt, a ſenſation in the ſtomach almoſt like that of hunger, followed quickly by lacerating or cutting-like pains through the whole ductus alimentalis, or alimentary canal, there followed by frequent evacuations ſtreaked with blood; a teneſmus, a pain ſymptomatic, in the loins; a loſs of appetite, fever, and a general laſſitude or loſs of ſtrength. He has known the ſymptoms come on exactly in this order; but in every caſe, which he conſidered as real dyſentery, the above treatment has ſucceeded.

CALEB ABERNETHY.

MISCELLANEOUS.

JOHNSON AND ADDISON COMPARED.

IT is leſs from Johnſon than from Addiſon, that we derive the intereſting leſſons of life and manners; that we learn to trace the exact delineations of character, and to catch the vivid hues, and varied tints of nature. It is true, that every ſentence of the more recent moraliſt is an aphoriſm, every paragraph a chain of maxims for guiding the underſtanding and guarding the heart. But when Johnſon deſcribes characters, he rather exhibits vice and virtue in the abſtract, than real, exiſting human beings; while Addiſon preſents you with actual men and women; real, life figures, compounded of the faults and the excellencies, the wiſdom and the weakneſſes, the follies and the virtues of humanity. By the Avarus, the Eubulus, the Miſellus, the Sophron, the Zoſima, and the Viator of Johnſon, we are inſtructed in the ſoundeſt truths, we are not ſtruck with any vivid exemplification. We merely *hear* them, and we hear them with profit, but we do not *know* them. Whereas, with the members of the Spectator's club we are *acquainted.* Johnſon's perſonages are elaborately carved figures, that fill the niches of the Saloon; Addiſon's are the living company which animate it. Johnſon's have more drapery; Addiſon's more countenance. Johnſon's gentlemen and ladies, ſcholars and chambermaids, philoſophers and coquettes, all argue ſyllogiſtically, all converſe in the ſame academic language; divide all their ſentences into the ſame triple members, turn every phraſe with the ſame meaſured ſolemnity, and round every period with the ſame poliſhed ſmoothneſs. Addiſon's talk learnedly or lightly, think deeply, or prate flippantly, in exact concordance with their character, ſtation, and habits of life.

Although the Cow has been univerſally conſidered, and claſſed among the *graminivorous* animals, the following fact, which can be atteſted by three gentlemen of reſpectability, who were eye-witneſſes, will at leaſt form an exception to that rule of claſſification:—They were riding through a large paſture field in Baltimore county, Maryland, in which a number of Cows were grazing, when their notice was attracted by the ſcreams of young birds, and on a more minute attention, they diſcovered a brace of young Larks, barely fledged, which had been driven from the parent's neſts, by one of the cows, by which they were inſtantly purſued, and after the heſitation of a moment, ſeized, and actually devoured alive.

Baltimore Telegraph.

LITERARY NOTICES.

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY.

THIS work has not as yet got into uſe in this quarter.—The following notice of it in the "*Panopliſt*" for May, will ſhew the general opinion of the Reviewer, reſpecting its merits, viz. "The author has examined his ſubject with that aſſiduity which it indiſpenſably requires; and has formed his judgment without ſervile regard to any authorities. When he differs from other lexicographers, he aſſigns his reaſons. Inſtead of truſting to lexicons and gloſſaries, Mr. Webſter has puſhed back his enquiries into the primitive Engliſh. By his knowledge of the Saxon language, the mother tongue of the Engliſh, he has one important advantage beyond the great *Johnſon* himſelf, who, though he cited paſſages from the Saxon, was either not acquainted with that language, or made little uſe of it in aſcertaining the orthography or etymology, much leſs the conſtruction of the Engliſh language." After noticing ſome of the principal additions to this dictionary, in which the Reviewer is pleaſed to recognize as improvements, and ſome errors in the execution, which are probably the effects of negligence or accident, the writer concludes with the following encomium:—"On the whole, we are highly gratified in ſeeing a literary work, which bears ſuch ſtrong marks of deep reſearch, extenſive learning and accurate diſcrimination, produced by one of our fellow-citizens, and as lovers of philology and of our country, we wiſh it may find a place, not on the toilette only, but in the printing-office and counting houſe. We hope, alſo, it will be introduced into our Schools, Academies, and even our Colleges.

[*Boſton Centinel.*

Mr. CARR, who has already favored the world with his Stranger in France, and with his Travels round the Baltic, has lately made *the Tour of Ireland*, and is now preparing an Account of that almoſt unknown country, which he intends to publiſh under the title of THE STRANGER IN IRELAND. The work will make one elegant volume, quarto, ſimilar to *the Northern Summer*, and will be embelliſhed with a variety of engravings by Medland, from drawings by Mr. Carr.

[*Monthly Mag.*

Meſſrs. Thomas and Thomas of Walpole, N. H. are about publiſhing a collection of Sermons, which were publiſhed under the name of Taylor, but are known to be the productions of the celebrated Dr. Johnſon, a circumſtance which cannot fail to ſecure them an extenſive ſale. *Emerald.*

The next number of the Tablet will be accompanied with a Title Page and Table of Contents for the volume. It will not be publiſhed till the 13th of Auguſt.

DIED,

In Africa, the celebrated Traveller MUNGO PARK. He was on a ſecond tour of diſcoveries in Africa.

At Hubbardſton, Mass. EDWARD A. SELFRIDGE, A. B. Student at Law, aged 20. His fancy was brilliant, his underſtanding vigorous, and his acquirements extenſive.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE LITERARY TABLET.

DEATH.....*A FRAGMENT.*

OH Death! inſatiate tyrant, why, ah why,
Muſt we thy power confeſs, nor know a hand
Able to ſave us? To the darkſome grave,
Inſenſate and unknowing, we're convey'd
To wait the reſurrection. Awful day!
When Angels, then, and Devils, meet at once,
And in dread horror hear their fatal doom;
Whether encircled with a wreath of glory,
Or forc'd in hell to mourn their fallen ſtate,
And curſe the name of goodneſs. Dreadful thought!
When dire convulſions ſhake the face of nature,
When awful diſcord reigns, and this fair earth
Is loſt again in chaos. Now, ſtern Death!
Thy opiate power is coveted. Now the rent air
Groans with the prayers of millions.
Virtues to light are brought, and Fame's loud trump
Proclaims our hidden vices. Goodneſs
And Virtue their rewards receive
Of their all ſeeing Judge; while ſin is caſt
Down the dread gulph of miſery and pain.

BELINDA.

FOR THE LITERARY TABLET.

Answer to the Question, "What is Virtue?"

And what is Virtue? do you aſk?
To anſwer is no eaſy taſk;
Yet leſt too ſoon the muſe ſhould fly,
To find the meaning, I will try.
'Tis when the heart is humble, low,
And feels a pang for other's woe;
Benevolent, forgiving, mild,
A parent to affliction's child;
Reſign'd beneath the chaſtening rod,
Confiding ſtill in "Nature's God."
Too humble to indulge in pride,
Too proud to walk by folly's ſide,
It gives religion all its heart,
And joyful takes the better part.
Such are the feelings I would chooſe,
Did not rebellious ſin refuſe,
And bid my heart the path purſue
That folly treads—'tis ſtill in view.—
Oh! when will virtue warm my ſoul,
And calm my paſſions in her ſchool?
When will that happy time arrive
When Hope ſhall bid my ſoul revive;
Exulting in my faith, ariſe,
And meet my *Father* in the ſkies?

BELINDA.

SELECTED POETRY.

AN EPISTLE TO J. HILL, ESQ.

By Cowper.

DEAR Joſeph—five and twenty years ago—
Alas, how time eſcapes!—'tis even ſo—
With frequent intercourſe, and always ſweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour, and now we never meet!
As ſome grave gentleman in Terence ſays,
('Twas therefore much the ſame in ancient days)
Good lack, we know not what tomorrow brings,
Strange fluctuation of all huuman things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But diſtance only cannot change the heart:
And, were I call'd to prove the aſſertion true,
One proof ſhould ſerve—a reference to you.
Whence comes it, then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occur'd to kindle ſtrife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though num'rous once, reduc'd to few or none?
Can gold grow worthleſs that has ſtood the touch?
No, gold they ſeem'd, but they were never ſuch.
Horatio's ſervant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overaw'd
Leſt he ſhould treſpaſs, begg'd to go abroad.
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning ſhort about—
Nay—ſtay at home—you're always going out.
'Tis but a ſtep, Sir, juſt at the ſtreet's end.—
For what?—An pleaſe you, Sir, to ſee a friend.
A friend! Horatio cried, and ſeem'd to ſtart—
Yea, marry ſhalt thou, and with all my heart.
And fetch my cloak; for, tho' the night be raw,
I'll ſee him too—the firſt I ever ſaw.
I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But ſomewhat at that moment pinch'd him cloſe
Elſe he was ſeldom bitter or moroſe,
Perhaps, his confidence juſt then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the ſpeech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmleſs play of pleaſantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Beſpoke at leaſt a man that knew mankind.
But, not to moralize too much, and ſtrain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments, verboſely ſpun)
One ſtory more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emp'ror, a wiſe man—
No matter where, in China or Japan—
Decreed, that whoſoever ſhould offend
Againſt the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, ſhould ever after wear
But half a coat, and ſhow his boſom bare.
The puniſhment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.
Oh, happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary meaſure here;
Elſe, could a law like that which I relate
Once have the ſanction of our triple ſtate,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run moſt dreadful riſk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind ſhould blow,
Might traverſe England ſafely to and fro,
An honeſt man, clole-buttoned to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

From the Farmer's Boy.

Giles having fatigued himſelf by his endeavours to frighten an hoſt of ſparrows from the wheat-ears, retires to repoſe beneath the friendly ſhelter of ſome projecting boughs.

Green covert hail! for through the varying year
No hours ſo ſweet, no ſcene to him ſo dear.
Here *Wiſdom's* placid eye delighted ſees
His frequent intervals of lonely eaſe,
And with one ray his infant ſoul inſpires,
Juſt kindling there her never-dying fires,
Whence ſolitude derives peculiar charms,
And heaven-directed thought his boſom warms.
Juſt where the parting bough's light ſhadows play,
Scarce in the ſhade, nor in the ſcorching day,
Stretch'd on the turf he lies, a peopled bed,
Where ſwarming inſects creep around his head.
The ſmall duſt-colour'd beetle climbs with pain
O'er the ſmooth plantain leaf, a ſpacious plain!
Thence higher ſtill, by countleſs ſteps convey'd,
He gains the ſummit of a ſhiv'ring blade,
And flirts his filmy wings, and looks around,
Exulting in his diſtance from the ground.
The tender ſpeckled moth here dancing ſeen,
The vaulting graſshopper of gloſſy green,
And all prolific Summer's ſporting train,
Their little lives by various powers ſuſtain.
But what can unaſſiſted viſion do?
What, but recoil where moſt it would purſue;
His patient gaze but finiſh with a ſigh,
When muſic waking ſpeaks the ſky-lark nigh.
Juſt ſtarting from the corn ſhe cheerly ſings,
And truſts with conſcious pride her downy wings;
Still louder breathes, and in the face of day
Mounts up, and calls on Giles to mark her way.
Cloſe to his eyes his hat he inſtant bends,
And forms a friendly teleſcope, that lends
Juſt aid enough to dull the glaring light,
And place the wand'ring bird before his ſight;
Yet oft beneath a cloud ſhe ſweeps along,
Loſt for a while, yet pours her varied ſong.
He views the ſpot, and as the cloud moves by,
Again ſhe ſtretches up the clear blue ſky;
Her form, her motion, undiſtinguiſh'd quite,
Save when ſhe wheels direct from ſhade to light:
The flutt'ring ſongſtreſs a mere ſpeck became,
Like fancy's floating bubbles in a dream:
He ſees her yet, but yielding to reſpoſe,
Unwittingly his jaded eyelids cloſe.
Delicious ſleep! From ſleep who could forbear,
With no more guilt than Giles, and no more care?
Peace o'er his ſlumbers waves her guardian wing,
Nor conſcience once diſturbs him with a ſting;
He wakes refreſh'd from every trivial pain,
And takes his pole and bruſhes round again.

RUINED MARY.

THE ſhrill guſt whiſtles o'er the plain,
The herds their ev'ning ſhelter ſeek:
And faſt deſcends the patt'ring rain,
That beats on Mary's pallid cheek.
Poor girl! ſhe wanders 'mid the ſtorm,
Nor knows her path is wet and dreary;
For reaſon fled her lovely form,
When love betray'd poor Ruin'd Mary.

Her dim eye ſcarce the path diſcerns;
Her tatter'd veſtments mock the blaſt;
Her wounded heart with madneſs burns,
And to the cliff ſhe wanders faſt.
Yet I remember well the day,
When ſhe was like the rambling fairy;
Among the gayeſt ſhe was gay,
Till love betray'd poor Ruin'd Mary.

'Twas in yon vine ſurrounded grove,
A lover won her virgin heart;
'Twas in yon fragrant ſweet alcove,
She firſt confeſs'd love's trait'rous ſmart.
'Twas there the voice of art beguil'd
A heart that knew not to be wary—
Seduction's fiends ſucceſsful ſmil'd,
And triumph'd over Ruin'd Mary.

Now ſad and mournful paſs her days,
For innocence has fled her breaſt;
And wild ſhe ſings her artleſs lays,
When darkneſs lulls the ſwains to reſt.
High on a jutting cliff ſhe ſtands,
Like ſome deſponding, wand'ring fairy;
In robes of white, with folded hands,
And breathes a prayer for Ruin'd Mary.